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Abstract

In this paper, a mixed-methods survey design was used to examine behavioral patterns in addiction recovery, focusing on stress, coping strategies, relapse vulnerability, and emotional regulation. The study combined demographic questions, Likert-scale items, and open-ended questions to collect quantitative and qualitative data. This paper, focuses on quantitative measures which assess perceived stress, coping behaviors, and recovery confidence, and qualitative responses exploring participants' lived experiences, including stress triggers and coping strategies. The design helped the analysis of measurable patterns in personal experiences to provide a comprehensive understanding of recovery processes. In this paper, I focused on data analysis by using statistics for quantitative responses and thematic analysis for qualitative responses. The paper focused on ethical considerations which included informed consent, confidentiality, emotional safety, and voluntary participation. Last, this paper examines addiction recovery influenced by behavioral and emotional factors and supports numerical and experiential data to understand recovery outcomes.

Understanding Behavioral Patterns in Addiction Recovery

Overview of Concepts Surveyed

This survey examines behavioral patterns in addiction recovery, focusing on how individuals respond to stress, triggers, and coping strategies at different stages of recovery (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Addiction recovery is a complex process influenced by emotional regulation, environmental factors, and social support. For example, individuals in early recovery report higher stress levels and stronger cravings compared to individuals in long-term recovery, which can increase the risk of relapse. Behavioral patterns in addiction recovery are determined by internal and external influences. Internal factors can include emotional distress, anxiety, or depression, while external factors can involve environmental cues, social interactions, or exposure to substances. For example, someone experiencing emotional distress might be more likely to engage in avoidance coping behaviors, while someone with strong social support might utilize healthier coping strategies. Behavioral patterns in addiction recovery are influenced by internal and external factors (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Internal factors include emotional distress, anxiety, or depression while external factors can include

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environmental indications, social interactions, or exposure to substances (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). For example, individuals experiencing emotional distress might be more likely to avoid coping behaviors, while someone with strong social support might focus on using healthier coping strategies (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Research shows that individuals who use adaptive coping strategies such as problem-solving or seeking support, are more likely to maintain long-term recovery than individuals that rely on maladaptive coping behaviors. Key concepts in this study include perceived stress, coping strategies, relapse triggers, emotional regulation, and length of recovery.

These concepts are grounded in established psychological research. For example, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) evaluates how individuals perceive stress in daily life, while the Brief COPE Inventory assesses adaptive and maladaptive coping responses (Cohen et al, 1983). These instruments are used because the instruments provide reliable and validated structure for understanding behavioral patterns in addiction research. The independent variables in the study include perceived stress levels, demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and recovery type, and length of time in recovery. The dependent variables include coping behaviors and relapse risk. For example, individuals with higher stress levels might rely on avoidance coping strategies, while individuals with longer recovery time might show more adaptive coping patterns (Carver, 1997). Overall, understanding the relationship between these variables helps researchers identify patterns that can inform treatment and recovery support strategies.

Overview of Questions

This survey uses a mixed-methods design that includes closed-ended, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions (David, 2024). Closed-ended questions collect demographic data, while Likert-scale questions use measurable data on stress and coping behaviors. Open-ended questions help participants to describe experiences in their own words, which can offer insight into the recovery process (Grenier, 2024). Including quantitative and qualitative questions which can strengthen the validity of the research. For example, Likert-scale responses allow statistical analysis of behavioral patterns, while open-ended responses help clarify the factors influencing the patterns (David, 2024).

Approximately 25-30 questions will be included in the survey (SurveyMonkey, n.d.). This length works because it balances collecting the information and reducing participant fatigue. For example, shorter, well-structured surveys can improve response rates and reduce dropout, especially in sensitive populations (Qualtrics, n.d.). Keeping the survey concise but comprehensive increases the chance of gaining accurate and complete responses.

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Survey Instrument Development

The survey instrument includes demographic, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions that capture behavioral patterns in addiction recovery (David, 2024).

Demographic Questions

The demographic questions include age, gender, employment status, length of time in recovery, and type of recovery program. These questions are used to categorize participants into groups for comparison and analysis.

Likert-Scale Questions (1-5 Scale)

The Likert-Scale includes statements designed to measure stress, coping strategies, relapse avoidance, perceived support, and confidence in maintaining recovery. Participants are asked to rate each statement on a 1-5 scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For example, the statements include items such as feeling overwhelmed by stress in daily life, using coping strategies when stressed, avoiding people or places that trigger cravings, feeling supported in the recovery process, and feeling confident in maintaining recovery. These items create quantitative data that can be analyzed to identify behavioral patterns that are related to stress and coping in addiction recovery (Cohen et al, 1983).

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions include participants' lived experiences in addiction recovery in their own words. These questions help develop insight into stressors, coping strategies, and recovery challenges that cannot be fully captured with numerical data alone (Grenier, 2024). For example, the open-ended questions include: What situations trigger cravings or stress in your recovery? What coping strategies have been most effective for you? What challenges have you experienced in maintaining recovery? How do you manage emotional distress without returning to substance use?

The survey is structured to progress from less sensitive to more sensitive questions. For example, demographic questions are first, followed by Likert-scale items, and then open-ended questions that focus on personal experiences. This question order helps reduce participant discomfort and supports honest responses. In addiction research, this structure is important because participants might feel vulnerable when discussing their recovery experiences.

Pilot testing should include 10-15 participants. Participants should represent the target population and include individuals at different stages of recovery. For example, pilot testing helps researchers to identify unclear or potentially sensitive questions and make revisions before full data collection. Ethical considerations at this stage include informed consent, confidentiality, and emotional safety (Fisher, 2020).

Analysis of Data

This study uses quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze survey data (Qualtrics, n.d.). Quantitative data from Likert-scale questions will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and group comparisons (Kumar, 2023). For example, researchers can examine if higher perceived stress scores are linked to increased use of avoidance coping strategies. Quantitative analysis helps researchers to identify measurable patterns and relationships in the data (Kumar, 2023). Qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participant responses will be coded and grouped into themes such as emotional distress, relapse triggers, coping strategies, and support systems (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, if multiple participants report isolation as a trigger, this theme can be coded and examined in relation to quantitative stress scores. Overall, this approach helps researchers identify patterns in participant experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Combining quantitative and qualitative findings provides a comprehensive understanding of addiction recovery. For example, statistical analysis may show a relationship between stress and coping behaviors, while qualitative responses help explain why the behavior occurs. The combination strengthens the validity of the findings and provides numerical and experiential understanding of recovery patterns.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required before conducting the study (Touro University Worldwide, n.d.). The IRB process requires that research involving human participants meets ethical standards and protects participant well-being. For example, the IRB reviews research proposals to confirm that informed consent is communicated, confidentiality is maintained, and potential risks are minimized (Touro University Worldwide, n.d.).

Participants in addiction recovery may experience emotional risks when discussing personal experiences (Fisher, 2020). For example, reflecting on past substance use or relapse can lead to discomfort or emotional distress (Fisher, 2020). To address this, participants will be informed that they can skip any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. In addition, participants will have access to support resources such as counseling services or recovery programs after completing the survey (Fisher, 2020). Confidentiality is also an important consideration. For example, data can be stored securely, and identifying information will be removed to protect privacy (Fisher, 2020). Ethical research practices require that participants are treated with respect, dignity, and care during the research process (Grad Coach, 2024).

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Summary and Contribution to Literature

This survey contributes to the existing literature on addiction recovery by using quantitative and qualitative methods. Many studies focus on measurable outcomes, such as relapse rates or stress levels, this research examines statistical patterns and personal experiences. For example, combining standardized instruments such as the Perceived Stress Scale and Brief COPE with open-ended responses helps researchers to connect numerical data with lived experiences (Carver, 1997). This research also contributes to treatment and recovery programs. For example, understanding how stress and coping strategies differ at different stages of recovery can help clinicians develop targeted interventions. Early recovery programs might focus on stress management and trigger avoidance, and long-term recovery programs prioritize emotional regulation and resilience. For example, these findings support personalized recovery strategies that can improve long-term outcomes for individual needs (Harzing & Reiche, 2023). Overall, this study improves understanding of addiction recovery and supports effective treatment approaches.

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In conclusion, the study examined behavioral patterns in addiction recovery with a focus on the relationship between stress, coping strategies, relapse vulnerability, and emotional regulation. Utilizing a mixed-methods survey design, the research focused on quantitative and qualitative approaches while providing a comprehensive understanding of recovery experiences. The study included demographic questions, Likert-scale items, and open-ended responses to help create a structured framework that showed measurable behavioral patterns and lived experiences. The survey design focuses on general background information, personal and reflective responses. This structure helped reduce participant discomfort and engagement, given the sensitive topic of addiction recovery. The Likert-scale section provided quantifiable data that helped to identify patterns in stress perception, coping behaviors, and recovery confidence. In contrast, the open-ended section provided a way for participants to express challenges, coping strategies, and emotional experiences in their own words. Using quantitative and qualitative data strengthened the research design by integrating numerical patterns with participant experience. This helps to understand how stress influences coping behaviors and how individuals adapt at different stages of recovery. Ethical considerations were important to the study. This study ensures participant confidentiality, informed consent, and minimizing emotional risk during the research process. Given the sensitive nature of addiction-related experiences, participants can skip questions, withdraw at any time without penalty, and access supportive resources. Pilot testing also strengthened the ethical aspects of the study by allowing refinement of questions and identification of sensitive areas before full data collection. Overall, this study contributes to the existing

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literature on addiction recovery by providing a balanced examination of statistical patterns and lived experiences. The findings support individualized and responsive approaches to treatment and effective recovery support for individuals dealing with high stress during recovery.

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Appendix A

Survey Instrument Behavioral Patterns in Addiction Recovery

Instructions

Please answer the questions focused on your experiences in addiction recovery. Your responses are confidential and will be used for research purposes only. You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

Section 1 Demographic Information

1. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55 or older

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other: _____

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3. What is your employment status?

- ☐ Employed full-time
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other: _____

4. How long have you been in recovery?

- ☐ Less than 3 months
- ☐ 3–6 months
- ☐ 6–12 months
- ☐ 1–3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

5. What type of recovery program are you involved in?

- ☐ Inpatient program
- ☐ Outpatient program
- ☐ 12-step program (e.g., AA/NA)
- ☐ Therapy/counseling
- ☐ Not currently in a program
- ☐ Other: _____

Section 2

Perceived Stress and Coping (Likert Scale)

Instructions:

Please respond to how much you agree with each statement using the scale below:

1 =Strongly Disagree

2 =Disagree

3 =Neutral

4 =Agree

5 =Strongly Agree

1. I feel overwhelmed by stress in my daily life.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

2. I use healthy coping strategies when I feel stressed.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

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3. I avoid people or places that trigger cravings.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
4. I feel supported in my recovery process.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
5. I feel confident in my ability to maintain recovery.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
6. I experience strong cravings when I am stressed.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
7. I use avoidance (e.g., isolation, distraction) to cope with stress.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
8. I feel emotionally stable most days.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
9. I seek support from others when I feel overwhelmed.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
10. I feel at risk of relapse when facing stressful situations.
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Section 3

Open-Ended Questions

1. What situations or environments trigger stress or cravings during your recovery?

2. What coping strategies are most effective for you?

3. What challenges have you experienced in maintaining recovery?

4. How do you manage emotional distress without going back to substance use?

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5. Is there anything else you would like to share about your recovery process?
